SCRIPT BITS!
Issue: Sonic the Hedgehog #168 (OCT'06)
Lead Story Pages: p1-4, p9-10
Back-up Story Pages: p2, p6-8

Welcome one and all to **Script Bits!** This monthly feature will take roughly forty-five percent of a story in Archie Comic's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and present it to you as insight into the writing process.

Part of the fun of this feature will be comparing what was written and what saw print. Sometimes the vision is tweaked as the artists interpret the script. Sometimes the original idea doesn't work once put on paper and must be adjusted from there. Sometimes the artist has a stroke of genius and does something different than what the script calls for - and it's for the better!

So pull out your copy of *Sonic the Hedgehog* #168 from October of 2006 and get ready to read along!

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Remembering "Order from Chaos" part one

"The Gathering" marked the beginning of a story I'd been longing to tell for years and a story I never thought I'd be a part of. The complete incongruity between the Chaos Emeralds of the comic and those of the game had been riding on my mind since the first Knuckles mini-series. While the details were always in flux, my primary idea of the gems being from all over the universe and being unified in the Zone of Silence had been stewing for ages.

What I never considered was being the one to end the Anonymous Conspiracy. I never expected to build upon it either, so the whole thing was a thrill. But my additions to the plot during "The Darkest Storm" only furthered the story. In "Order from Chaos" I would have to account for everything. That everything included:

- The Metal Destructix of StH#135
- Auto-Automation / Infiltrator Tommy of StH#136
- the Nanite City of StH#152
- the Metal Sonic Troopers from Sth#157-159
- the nanite infestation of Nicole, Bunnie, Jules and Tommy in StH#159
- All of "The Darkest Storm" which ran StH#162-164

A list like that does seem a bit daunting when put like that, and I'm actually rather glad I didn't think of it that way when I started writing! In retrospect I find it even more impressive it all came together since the story received a fairly massive revision.

In the original treatment, Tommy was the one to capture Tails and bring him to the Nanite City. Jules would be incapacitated somewhere while the Bunnie/Nicole scene would play out about the same.

Anonymous was originally going to possess one final Neo Metal Sonic, or Metal Sonic Trooper as they were called in the comic. Presented as the stately villain we barely glimpsed in *Sonic Heroes,* Anonymous would still enter the Chaos Emeralds in StH#169 and would have turned into the Metal Overlord. There it would be defeated in battle with Super Sonic and the Egg Fleet.

Sadly the idea got the kibosh since Sega thought one appearance of the Neo Metal Sonic design was enough and said Metal Overlord was off-limits. So where to turn next?

Tommy Turtle was still fated to die a fiery, fiery death, but much later. The original idea was he would be E-123 Omega's first victim during a separate storyline. Omega's eventual appearance was also nipped early in the bud, so now I was denied both my super-battle and Tommy's blazing end.

The answers were within each other, and ultimately, I think they told a far superior story. It gave A.D.A.M. a new level of treachery and gave me a window to both redeem and totally obliterate Tommy. This goes to show there is no such thing as a creative road-block, only muses in disguise.

With this installment of *Script Bits!*, I've decided to give special attention to certain points in the story where I put in an in-joke or there was a reason that didn't seem readily apparent on the surface. Ladies and gentle, I introduce you to:

Easter Eggs

- A point that I don't think was made implicitly clear was that among the seven Chaos Emeralds A.D.A.M. had gathered for the focusing spire, one of them used to belong to Mogul. So Mogul has a divot in his chest and no more Chaos Powers.
- Tracy Yardley, a big *Back to the Future* fan, included a flux capacitor in the focusing spire. You can see it the most clearly on the last page.

SONIC THE HEDEHOG - ORDER FROM CHAOS - PART ONE

PGS: 14
D.O.S.:
CODE#:
C.C.:

PAGE ONE

PANEL 1 - The Brain Trust nook of FREEDOM HQ. (see S#160). SONIC marches into the room, annoyed. TAILS and ROTOR look up from their work, their heads framing SONIC in the panel. TAILS and ROTOR looks moderately surprised to see SONIC. TITLE over SONIC's head, credits either along the bottom or as labels to gadgets in the room - if you can.

SONIC
TOMMY!
You can't just borrow my guitar and then jet, dude.
Where is he?

TITLE: Order from Chaos
Part One: The Gathering

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Special thanks to: _____ at Sega Licensing

PANEL 2 - ROTOR looks up with a smoldering, annoyed look and lifts a petri dish. TAILS holds up a jumbled mess of parts, gears and stuff. TAILS looks especially annoyed.

ROTOR
I don't know. Hopefully far from here.

TAILS
I've got first dibs.
He "helped" me with my latest project.
See?

ROTOR
And he washed the "dirty" petri dishes,
Which destroyed any nanite research I had going on.

PANEL 3 - SONIC crosses his arms and rolls his eyes. ROTOR hunkers back over his work while TAILS throws his jumble of stuff aside in distaste.

SONIC
Ever since he got that dose of nanites in his shell,*
Tommy's been acting up.

ROTOR
As if he wasn't constantly in trouble anyway.

SONIC
Yeah, but the dude saved my life.**
He can't be all bad.

TAILS
No, not **all** bad.

TEXT BOX
"There is always pride before the fall."

EDITOR'S NOTE
*see S#154 and then:
**see S#117

PAGE TWO

PANEL 1 - Dr. Eggman's lab. It is dark here, lit only by a few scattered computer monitors. DR. EGGMAN works at a computer with a particularly large screen. EGGMAN scowls in concentration. One computer screen hangs over EGGMAN's head and features a single green light, looking almost eye-like. This is A.D.A.M.

ADAM (square, green balloon)
What did you mean by that, father?

EGGMAN
It's a lesson I'm about to teach Anonymous.
My mysterious foe is about to go down, A.D.A.M.

ADAM (square, green balloon)
Congratulations, father.
You've been at odds with Anonymous for some time now.

PANEL 2 - We're behind EGGMAN as he looks on the screen. Fit whatever "easter eggs" you want on the screen (perhaps a start-bar labeled WinEgg?), but we should see a large task bar on the screen. It reads "A.D.A.M. - Deletion Status" and it is nearly complete.

ADAM (square, green balloon - from off-panel)
May I ask why you are deleting me, father?

EGGMAN
I told you, A.D.A.M.
Anonymous is going down.

ADAM (square, green balloon - from off-panel)
I'm afraid you are not making sense, father.

EGGMAN
You know better than that.
I figured it out.

PANEL 3 - We sit on the keyboard and watch EGGMAN as she scowls and works. The space to OUR RIGHT fades into flash-back. We see the METAL DESTRUCTIX (see S#135)

EGGMAN
I should've been more suspicious from the beginning when Anonymous sent me the Metal Destructix and the video of their capture.*
I knew the robots were cheap replicas then, but I didn't realize the video hidden in them was fake.

EDITOR'S NOTE
*see S#135

PAGE THREE

PANEL 1 - Flash-back panel. We're in the seedy bar from S#135. In the background, we see SONIC leap-frog over METAL SGT. SIMIAN. In the foreground, we see FAKE TOMMY with red eyes and a drill-hand standing over two other torn-up METAL DESTRUCTIX. Technically, I think it's supposed to be METAL DRAGO and METAL SLEUTH, but they should be in such a state that we can't recognize them.

TEXT BOX (Eggman)
Then I realized the Metal Destructix were only a vehicle to get the Auto-Automation of Tommy Turtle close to Sonic.*

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM)
Well done, father.

EDITOR'S NOTE
*See S#136
You might want to get your Back Issue Order Sheet ready . . .

PANEL 2 - Flasback. Aerial view of the NANITE CITY (see S#152)

TEXT BOX (EGGMAN)
You told me it was Anonymous who unleashed my nanites to create that Nanite City. . .**

EDITOR'S NOTE
**see S#152

PANEL 3 - Flashback. The Egg Vinyard (see S#141). EGGMAN retreats down a corridor while we see the SPIDER KIDS hold up the SWORD OF ACORNS.

TEXT BOX (EGGMAN)
. . . and let in those spider ninjas who freed my old rival - Ixis Naugus - and disposed of all my occupied Egg Grapes.***

EDITOR'S NOTE
***see S#161
See? Didn't we tell you?

PANEL 4 - Flashback. The death of the Ancient Walkers, as seen in S#161

TEXT BOX (EGGMAN)
The dimensional ripple caused by Naugus' escape went on to destroy the Ancient Walkers . . .****

EDITOR'S NOTE
****see S#161
My gosh . . . it's full of stars . . .

PANEL 5 - Flashback. MAMMOTH MOGUL stands before SONIC, TAILS and KING ELIAS. (see S#162 for scene reference)

TEXT BOX (EGGMAN)
. . . which all served to free the most powerful villain of all time, Mammoth Mogul.*****

ADAM
What does that have to do with me, father?

EDITOR'S NOTE
*****see S#162!
Whew!

PAGE FOUR

PANEL 1 - The lab. EGGMAN points to a screen that shows MAMMOTH MOGUL climbing from an EGG GRAPE, clutching his chest. We see ADAM's screen as well.

EGGMAN
Because I just watched **you** steal his Chaos Emerald and release both him and Ixis Naugus!

ADAM

You've been spying on me, father?
That is not very nice.

EGGMAN
"Not very nice"?!
I'll tell you what's not very nice!

PANEL 2 - Flasback. MECHA's self-destruction. See S#162

TEXT BOX (EGGMAN)
Your bogus information on Anonymous led to the destruction of your sister, Mecha . . .*

EDITOR'S NOTE
*see S#162

PANEL 3 - Flashback. A scene of EGGMAN and MECHA running from the METAL SONIC TROOPERS. See S#158

TEXT BOX (EGGMAN)
. . . and you sent Knothole's army of Metal Sonic Troopers after me!**

EDITOR'S NOTE
**see S#158
Sorry, only two this time!

PANEL 4 - EGGMAN points and screams at ADAM's screen.

EGGMAN
I **know** that **you are Anonymous!**
So I'm deleting you from existence you treasonous waste of coding!

ADAM (square, green balloon)
Such harsh language is unnecessary, father.

PANEL 5 - EGGMAN frumps in his seat, scowling. ADAM's monitor goes dark.

EGGMAN
Oh shut up and be deleted already.

ADAM (square, green balloon)
*!

PANEL 1 - The base of the spire. NOTE: This spire is VERY tall, going at least five stories and is wide enough at the base to hold two mobians and the chaos emeralds. We can see the ring of CHAOS EMERALDS and now two vertical chambers or booths under them. EGGMAN stands in front of the spire, his back to us. We cannot see EGGMAN's hands. SHADOW rushes past us from the foreground - towards EGGMAN.

TEXT BOX
The Nanite City

SHADOW
What is it, doctor?

PANEL 2 - Extreme close-up of EGGMAN's panicked face. It occupied the bottom-left corner. SHADOW approaches, annoyed.

SHADOW
First you send me to hunt down Mammoth Mogul and Ixis Naugus.
Then you tell me to meet you here.
You need to make up your . . .

PANEL 3 - Largest panel on the page. We see ADAM/TOMMY, arms crossed, with an evil smile on his face. Two more "limbs" grow from ADAM/TOMMY's shell: one to cover EGGMAN's mouth, and one to tie EGGMAN's hands in front of them. EGGMAN, thus, stands immediately behind ADAM/TOMMY. SHADOW pauses, surprised.

SHADOW
. . . mind?

ADAM/TOMMY (square, green balloon)
Hello Shadow.

PANEL 4 - Long panel. SHADOW leaps backwards into the foreground/towards us. ADAM/TOMMY turns and lashes out at SHADOW - his silver arm extends, the claws smashing into the ground. The two extra "limbs" that held EGGMAN atrophy and shrink back into ADAM/TOMMY's shell. We can see EGGMAN tossed aside in the background.

ADAM/TOMMY
You're the last piece of the puzzle!

PAGE TEN

PANEL 1 - ADAM/TOMMY claps his hands together like steel trap. SHADOW leaps over ADAM/TOMMY.

SHADOW
I recognize the voice as A.D.A.M.
Who is the mobian you're using?

ADAM/TOMMY (square, green balloon)
A gullible friend of Sonic's.
Tommy has been a wonderful inside agent.

SFX (hands)
CLANG!

PANEL 2 - Aerial shot. ADAM/TOMMY doesn't move from the previous position. A third arm sprouts from ADAM/TOMMY's shell and punches SHADOW in the back/out of the air. SHADOW winces.

ADAM/TOMMY (square, green balloon)
And the perfect hiding place once father finally unraveled the Anonymous Conspiracy.

SFX (Shadow/third fist)
WHUD!

PANEL 3 - ADAM/TOMMY swivels in place and brings one fist up and over his head. The fist has grown to be enormous. The fist comes crashing down on SHADOW, smashing him into the ground. The third arm atrophies and shrinks back into ADAM/TOMMY's shell.

ADAM/TOMMY (square, green balloon)
And now I have made him the most powerful mobian alive.

SFX (fist/Shadow/ground)
WHAM!

PANEL 4 - ADAM/TOMMY lifts SHADOW out of a small crater in the ground. SHADOW is limp and groggy. ADAM/TOMMY's arm bends and arches to the extreme, as if it were a crane arm made of putty.

ADAM/TOMMY (square, green balloon)
Even more powerful than the Ultimate Lifeform.

Remembering "Courage and Honor"

It had been my intention that this story run much closer to the reveal of Patch and the realization that General D'Coolette was being poisoned. I was afraid that too much time between stories would weaken the impact of the plot development. That was part of my impetus to make is as powerful as it was.

Secondly, I planned to revive the king. But for his survival to be in any doubt, Patch's plan had to have had some merit to it. So if the poison were to claim the general's life (coupled with my track-record of eliminating characters), Maximilian Acorn would truly look to be in peril.

Third, but most important to me, was I wanted to show I understood the gravity of eliminating characters. This was especially critical because it was such a personal loss. Mecha was never really built-up as a daughter in some kind of twisted family dynamic, so I could only play with that so much. Sir Connery went out nobly in battle, and Tommy wasn't scheduled for a while at that point. I didn't want the general's passing to be another "comic book death."

This was also a hard issue to write because it brought Antoine to the very bottom of the barrel and he had to survive it. Bunnie was the life-saver for us both, because without her I don't think he would have emerged from it very well and I wouldn't have been able to do much to help him.

This issue was also my effort to put the very last issue from StH#150 to bed. The questionable scene of Bunnie and Evil Sonic cuddled in a secluded spot still left a bit of a smudge on the reunion between Bunnie and Antoine. While I contend nothing of great importance happened between her and Evil Sonic it was still something that would ride on the honor of our southern belle. Thankfully, the general put it into context for us and put the issue to bed.

I also had to explain why nothing had been done in the time between the general's diagnosis and this issue, or why his onset of illness hadn't been caught for what it was. That was the primary point of Dr. Quack's explanation of the poison Patch used. To round out the scene, though, we see the usually vivacious and sarcastic doctor given pause when he cannot save his patient.

The story is dedicated to my late grandmother. She was a wonderful, loving and fun woman. She was usually at a loss when it came to my interest; namely the mutant turtles who practiced ninjitsu, a blue hedgehog that fought robots, and a blonde-headed potto who had his own adventures. But she always was interested in them, always supportive in my creative endeavors, and never ceased to be amazed with what I created. It is a crime that the world was robbed over her so soon and it's a loss that still won't let go of me to this day.

I know she would be tremendously proud of what I've achieved with *Sonic* and with my life in general. Perhaps it's selfish of me but I sorely wish I could experience that pride than just know of it. In that respect I felt I could sympathize with Antoine as we were both robbed of someone dear. So with this story I wanted to be sure Antoine got everything from it – forgiveness, support, love and closure. It's very rare that when we lose someone like this we have the benefit of saying what we want to before it's too late. Since I controlled the universe this one time I made sure it turned out all right for Antoine and Bunnie.

Easter Eggs

- The photograph in Antoine's hand has his own image torn from it, both symbolic of Patch's efforts and showing his hatred for Antoine.
- Gary Bendell included what looks very much like a pokeball in the first panel and was colored that way by the Rays. I don't know for certain if that was the collective intent, though.

PAGE TWO

Panel One: Page-width panel - narrow, caps the top of the page. BUNNIE looks about the dim, clean but barren room. She smiles sadly, weakly encouraging him. ANTOINE takes her normal hand in his own, the photo dangling from his other hand. He looks about the room as well - their eyes don't meet.

BUNNIE
You've made some progress.
It's . . . orderly.

ANTOINE
Oui, ze Evil Antoine made his mark.
Eet has been
. . . difficult . . .
picking up ze pieces.

Panel Two: BUNNIE in the background, ANTOINE in foreground. BUNNIE adjusts the blanket on the couch, as if making ANTOINE's bed for him. ANTOINE stares off ahead into space, his free hand gingerly and unconsciously running down the scar on his face.

BUNNIE
Why go tuh all that trouble, tho'?
Was destroyin' everything you loved some kinda thrill fo' him?

ANTOINE
I do not know, Bunnie.
In ze months I spent wit' ze Evil Freedom Fighters, I found zey were not so much mean as . . .
Sad.

Panel Three: Same layout as previous panel. BUNNIE stands and fluffs the pillow, giving ANTOINE a curious look - as if to say "Do you hear what you're saying?" He takes his hand from his scar, glaring at it. Sharp shadows mark his features - we can see he's carried over a little of the "grim-Twan" with him.

BUNNIE

You feel sorry fo' 'em?
After all they've done to us?

ANTOINE
Oui, but only zo far as one pities those who cannot help themselves.
They have my pity, but not my forgiveness.

Panel Four: BUNNIE places her real hand on his shoulder, turning him to her. The harsh shadows on ANTOINE's face are gone. BUNNIE looks at him worriedly, but ANTOINE gives her a reassuring smile.

BUNNIE
Aight, sugah.
Yo' startin' to sound like **him.**

ANTOINE
I am zorry, mon amour.
Eet is hard to be pleasant in such squalor.

Panel Five: Close-up on the couple. They are fully facing each other. Both of BUNNIE's hands are in ANTOINE's. They look into each other's eyes, BUNNIE blushing a bit. They smile nervously. Softer tones and lines in this one panel.

BUNNIE
There'd be plenty ah room in mah place, but . . .

ANTOINE
Oui, chivalry dictates that first . . .
. . . that first I propo-

<u>PAGE SIX</u>

Panel One: DAD raises ANTOINE's face up with his boney hand under his son's chin. ANTOINE's cheeks are tear-streaked, his eyes shimmering with more tears to come. DAD raises a questioning eyebrow.

DAD
What kind of joke is this?

ANTOINE
. . . joke?

Panel Two: Long panel to get all of DAD's speech. ANTOINE clutches DAD's hand to his cheek, eyes closed and with more tears. DAD speaks clearly and strongly - this is the old guy we've seen before.

DAD
Mon fils a failure?
He protected his friends despite his jealousies.
He fought against impossible odds because it was right.
He has fought ze Eggman since he was a little boy.
He served king and country even when ze were only a memory.
He has won ze heart of a beautiful warrior.
How is mon fils a failure?

Panel Three: We sit on BUNNIE's shoulder. DAD points at her with his boney hand, the same stern and powerful look on his face. ANTOINE almost wheels around as he looks over his shoulder at BUNNIE.

BUNNIE
Oh no, sir.
I've . . . I've done . . .

DAD
As for you . . .!

PAGE SEVEN

Panel One: ANTOINE takes BUNNIE's mechanical hand and leads her closer to his side. DAD continues to point at her. We sit at DAD's bedside.

DAD
You 'ave fought Robotnik for your very soul.
You fight with ze same courage as mon fils.
You make him happy.

BUNNIE
But I . . . with Sonic . . .*

EDITORIAL NOTE
They kissed in S#152

Panel Two: DAD gives her a wry smile. BUNNIE looks away, blushing. ANTOINE looks after her, trying to catch her eye. Focus on the couple's faces.

DAD
All is fair in love and war, n'est pas?
Is he worth ze effort to make him jealous?

BUNNIE
. . . yes.
Ah should'a gone about if a different way, tho' . . .

Panel Three: DAD reaches under ANTOINE and BUNNIE's clasped hands, his other hand slowly making its way over too. ANTOINE and BUNNIE share shy looks and wan smiles.

DAD
Does she make you happy, Antoine?

ANTOINE
She always has.

DAD
And do you still want him, Ms. Rabbot?

BUNNIE
Ah nevah stopped.

Panel Four: DAD's hands close around ANTOINE and BUNNIE's, uniting them. ANTOINE and BUNNIE look down at the symbolic union, wide-eyed.

DAD
Then for ze sake of ze Source, do not let go!
Love is a rare thing.
Nevair give it up easily.

PAGE EIGHT

Panel One: DAD rests heavily into his pillow, his eyes rolling back in his head slightly, the strength gone from his face. ANTOINE leans with him, terrified, his hand still firmly clutching BUNNIE's. She leans in to, eyes brimming with new tears.

DAD (shakey)
ooh . . .

ANTOINE
PAPA!

DAD (shakey bubble)
Antoine . . . mon fils . . .

I will tell . . . your mother . . . how happy you are . . .

Panel Two: ANTOINE strokes his father's wispy hair with his free hand. Tears hang in the corners of his eyes again. DAD closes his eyes, smiling. BUNNIE holds her free hand to her face, crying openly now. She holds ANTOINE's hand fiercely.

DAD (shakey bubble, small text)
She would be . . .as proud of you . . . as I am . . .

ANTOINE
Merci beaucoup, mon papa . . .
Au revoir . . .

BUNNIE
Thank you . . .

Panel Three: ANTOINE sits and stares at his still father. BUNNIE puts her arm around him, pulling him close to her and hugging him. Her face contorts in a controlled sob.

BUNNIE
Ah'm so sorry, Antoine.

Panel Four: Final fourth of the page. The hospice room is washed in sunlight, casting almost everything shades of white. The bed, DAD's form, ANTOINE and BUNNIE are cast in black silhouette.

TEXT BOX (left bottom corner)
In loving memory of
Jane Flynn
1922 - 2002

TEXT BOX (right bottom corner)
Fin